

### REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicants' attorney during the interview held August 12, 2004, in the above-identified application. During the interview, Applicants' attorney explained the presently-claimed invention and why it is patentable over the applied prior art. The discussion is summarized and expanded upon below.

The present invention relates to a polyvinyl acetal having N-vinylamide monomer units in the molecule, and to its use as a binder in an ink or paint, or in a ceramic green sheet.

The rejection of Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, EP799,712A1 (EP '712), is respectfully traversed. EP '712 discloses a recording medium containing an ink receiving layer composed of a composition or a cured product thereof containing at least (A) a polyvinyl acetal resin having acetal groups, acetyl groups and hydroxyl groups, (B) a monomer having an active energy ray curable ethylenic unsaturated group, such as N-vinyl pyrrolidone and N-vinyl caprolactam (page 5, line 48), and (C) a cationic resin (paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4).

EP '712 neither anticipates nor otherwise renders unpatentable the presently-claimed invention. As Applicants' attorney noted during the above-referenced interview, the polyvinyl acetal of the present invention has N-vinylamide monomer units in the molecule. In other words, the polyvinyl acetal of the present invention is a copolymer derived from at least vinyl ester monomer units and N-vinylamide monomer units, wherein the ester groups have been at least partially saponified to form hydroxyl groups, which hydroxyl groups are then at least partially acetalized by reacting with an aldehyde. The composition or cured product of EP '712 is necessarily different from the present polyvinyl acetal. Presumably, upon curing, monomer (B) of EP '712, when N-vinyl pyrrolidone or N-vinyl caprolactam, produces poly(N-vinyl pyrrolidone) or poly(N-vinyl caprolactam) respectively. To the extent

there may be any reaction between components (A) and (B) of EP '712, the result could not possibly be the present polyvinyl acetal.

It appears that the Examiner agrees with the above analysis, as indicated in the Interview Summary corresponding to the above-referenced interview. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

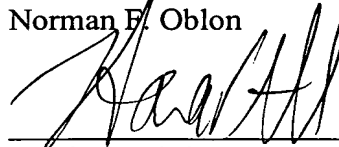
The rejection of Claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over EP '712 in combination with EP 1,384,730 (EP '730), is respectfully traversed. The disclosures and deficiencies of EP '712 have been discussed above. EP '730 does not remedy these deficiencies. Thus, even if the composition or cured product of EP '712 were used as a binder for ceramic forming or a binder for ink or paint, the result would still not be the presently-claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully call the Examiner's attention to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed August 30, 2004. The Examiner is respectfully requested to initial the Form PTO 1449 submitted therewith, and include a copy thereof with the next Office communication.

All of the presently-pending claims in this application are now believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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